OR, A

DISCOURSE

Touching the

Peace and Concord

OF

The Church.

Wherein is Elegantly and Acutely argued, That not so much a bad Opinion, as a bad Life, excludes a Christian out of the Kingdom of Heaven : And that the things necessary to be known for the attainment of Salvation are very Few and Easie : And finally, that those, who pass amongst us under the Name of *Hereticks*, are notwithstanding to be tollerated.

LONDON,

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TO THE

READER.

THE Author of this Diſcourſe, Chriſtian Reader, a Man, as it appeareth, both Pious and Learned, knowing that of all the Families and Societies of *Chriſtians*, they are moſt hated, who by their Profeſſion and Writings maintain the Opinion of *Socinus* touching the *Eſſence* and *Office* of Chriſt, endeavoured by this Diſcourſe to abate the hatred of certain Zealots againſt the *Socinians*, not that he approved their Doctrine (for he once and again diſowns it) but becauſe he was perſwaded, that if the harſh Judgments of men were once mitigated concerning the moſt odious Opinion of all, the heat of that bitter Zeal wherewith *Chriſtians* are generally incited to perſecute Diſſenters in Religion, would by degrees evaporate. But if thou, *Chriſtian* Reader, doſt from thy heart aſpire to the knowledge of God, and his Son Jeſus Chriſt, therein, as Chriſt himſelf teſtifieth, eternal

Life doth conſiſt, *John* 17. 3. Fetch not the beginning thereof either from *Socinus*, (a man otherwiſe of great underſtanding in the Myſtery of the Goſpel) nor from his Adverſaries, but being mindful of thoſe words, *Luke* 10.22. *None knowing who the Son is, but the Father; and who the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him*; Lay aſide for a while Controverſal Writings, together with thoſe prejudicate Opinions that have been inſtilled into thine unwary Underſtanding; and cloſely applying thy ſelf to the ſearch of the New-Covenant, moſt ardently implore the Grace of Chriſt, that he would be pleaſed to manifeſt himſelf and the Father to thee, and make no doubt but the true Light will at length illuminate the eyes of thy Mind, that thou mayſt walk in the way that leadeth unto Life. *Farewel.*

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A Discourse

A DISCOURSE Touching the PEACE and CONCORD OF THE Church.

CHAP. I.

The Lot of Truth and Innocency in this World. A Guess of the Author touching himself.

TRuth was never called into question, but *Innocency* was fain to plead for her self at the same Bar; nor hath the *One* been more hated than the *Other* always envied. Indeed we Men are very prone to Evil, and therefore hate not only the *open* freedom of a true Judgment, but also the *tacite* censure of another's Integrity. Nor is this a Crime peculiar to our Age. 'Twas heretofore the disposition of Wickedness, no less to fear the mute *Innocency* of another, than the living Voice of a Reprover; nor can it be otherwise *hereafter*, but that Virtue should become a *Goad* to their senses, whose Minds have been seized with Vices. But though *our* wickedness may seem to have a kind of right to detest such *Truth*, as toucheth the *Ulcers* of our sins, yet why should we abominate her that casts a harmless eye towards Heaven? Is it because, as both these cure the two diseases of the Mind, our *Errours* namely, and our *Vices*, so we are delighted with both those Distempers? Undoubtedly here lies the pinch. We are more enamoured of our *Errours* than of all our Darlings, either because they wink at the scapes and dalliance of our *Affections*; or because we are enraged against *Dissenters* with obstinate *Prejudice* and frantick affectation of *Parties*. Howbeit, we never *erre* with greater de-

delight than about the ſenſe of *divine Matters*, and are ſo far from acknowleding thoſe ſlips, (the witneſſes of *humane Imbecility*) that we account them for Oracles. Nor is our raſhneſs content to have pleaſed *her ſelf* herein, but obtrudeth her Notions upon *others* againſt their Wills: and the licence of determining is wont to aſſume ſo much to it ſelf, that it excludeth a liberty of *diſſenting* in the ſmalleſt tittle. After the Judgments of Mankind had been oppreſſed in this manner, the Church for many Ages was overſpread with *thick darkneſs*, whil'ſt the greateſt part had neither liberty to *utter* what they underſtood, nor liſt to *underſtand* what they might not utter. And though there have been ſo many winds and ſtorms of Contention in the *Chriſtian World*, yet have they not to this very day been able to diſſipet ſo great a *Fog*, ſo that amidſt the *Clouds* diſperſed over all the Skie, there are ſome few who through the Intervals behold the whole face of the *Sun*; whil'ſt others ſee afar off ſome gleams of the light, but ſhall ere long diſcover the very *Sun* it ſelf. The *Truth* being thus muffled with *Errours*, hath not yet ſhewn her ſelf to all with a full countenance, altho ſhe hath aforehand darted out the rays of her light unto a great part of men. But whatſoever is to come hereafter, divine things are at preſent envelloped with groſs darkneſs. Yet is there nothing that more obſcureth the Myſtery of *Eternal Salvation* than the Ignorance of the way, that leadeth us to the top of ſo great happineſs. For as all things ſituated on high, are wont to have a hard and difficult acceſs; ſo alſo hath that *towring* height of the Life to come. Nor is it for every man to get up through ſteep aſcents, eſpecially for them whoſe *earthly Minds* & *dull Spirits* preſs them down to *low deſires*.

And therefore to the great deſtruction of Mankind, *another* way to happineſs hath been invented, *eaſie* indeed and expedite, but ſuch as reacheth not to the end aimed at. For the greateſt part of men, thinking it very toilſome to aſcend thither by *Holineſs of Life*, ſought out a ſhorter cut, conſiſting in *Ceremonies*, the meer confeſſion of *Faith*. And this is the way by which the greateſt part as yet think to aſcend to Heaven, not caring what their *actions* are, ſo their *Opinions* be right, and tho extreamly curious to pry into other things, yet having no regard to their *Life* and *Manners*. So that it is no marvel, inaſmuch as Men every where take greater care of their *Wit* than of their *Minds*, that the very leaſt failing in the *Knowledge* of divine things ſhould be eſteemed of greater moment to eternal deſtruction than the commiſſion of the fouleſt *Crimes*. But this ſeemeth ſomewhat monſtrous, how ſome men ſhould arrive at ſo much Confidence, as that, tho in their *Life* & *Manners* they even againſt their wills acknowledg'd the *failings* of their Mortality, yet

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in their *Judgments* and *Opinions* they ſhould forget their *Condition*: and tho in the very *Soul of Faith*, I mean *Good Works*, they do by reaſon of their ſins ſo often ſlip, ſhould yet imagine that in the Carcaſe only, I mean *Faith*, they cannot poſſibly offend. For, whence proceedeth this blind and precipitant humour of condemning others, but from raſhneſs of *defining*? Whence ſo great boldneſs of determining, but from the preſumption of an Infallible Judgment? And, which is worſt of all, a man now-a-days can no ſooner fail in his Underſtanding, but preſently his *Honeſty* is reproached; and oftentimes the reprehenſion of *Opinions* degenerateth into the accuſation of *Manners*. As for my ſelf, before I lanch out of the Haven, I do already foreſee *Storms*; nor am I in ſo great fear for the Opinion which I purpoſe in this *Diſcourſe*, as for my *Credit* and *Security*. For how few are there who will cenſure this *Treatiſe*, without doing Injury to the Author? who is there that will ſet a mark on ſome miſtake thereof, and not withal brand me with ſome reproach? If any thing here ſhall ſeem falſe to ſome men, they will account me not only a *Lyar*, but an *Impious* Perſon. They will call me *Deceiver*, and Patron of damned *Hereſy*; and this Writing will be ſo fifty-cuffed by many, that I my ſelf perhaps, were I known, ſhould not eſcape Scot free. But my Mind being pure and untainted, will from my *Conſcience* reap that fruit of my Labour, which was due to it from the Judgments of Men: nor will I eſteem it a weak Argument of having defended the Truth, to have my Innocency ſo wickedly traduced. For the ſame Spirit is wont to oppoſe both of them: nor ought it to ſeem ſtrange to any man, that a moſt true *Opinion* ſhould be unjuſtly taxed of *Errour*, when he ſhall ſee his own Innocency circumvented with falſe accuſations. Nevertheleſs I inſtantly beſeech them, who after they have read this Diſcourſe, ſhall vote concerning my Reputation, that they would not charge me with other men's Faults; and that my harmleſs freedom may not be any prejudice to me. Let none impute to me the Patronage of *Errour*, if I have perhaps been favourable unto *ſuch as erre*; unleſs he ſuppoſe it to be the duty of a man, when he is diſpleaſed with the *Vices*, to be angry with the *Perſons* alſo.

CHAP. II.

What things concerning God and Chriſt are neceſſary to be known unto Salvation; and what are the Parts of true Faith.

THE whole body of the Church hath now for a long time been infeſted with an *evil Spirit*, which ſets the ſeveral Members at odds

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amongſt themſelves. Certainly it is obſtinate *Ambition* that cheriſheth the humour of raiſing *Parties*, much oyl is poured on this flame by a vain perſwaſion concerning the points in controverſie, that in each of them the *ſum of our Religion* lies at ſtake. How deeply this opinion hath taken root in our minds, is evident from the Civil Wars amongſt us, whereby our hatred turneth to our mutual Ruine. But how frivulous and falſe it is, ſhall plainly appear from what we mean to ſpeak afterwards; wherein to examine all things that come into debate, would be a long and toilſome Buſineſs. It is ſufficient to cull out one of the chiefeſt points in Controverſy, which if we ſhall evince not to be *neceſſarily required* to the attainment of *Eternal Happineſs*, much leſs will it be true in the other lighter ones. And this is an exact knowledge of the *Divine Eſſence* (as they term it) and a diſtinct Explication of the *Holy Trinity*. Undoubtedly no man can comprehend the *Nature of God*, and the reſtleſs diſpoſition of our Mind doth here in him beſtir it ſelf, to reach ſo high a Myſtery in this Life. We may indeed by our Reaſon very eaſily ſeparate not only *Defects*, but alſo the very ſhadow of Imperfection from ſo great a Majeſty, but to form in our Minds an Image *worthy* of that moſt noble Eſſence, is beyond the compaſs of our Mortality. And conſequently we may, and ought to know what it *is not*: but to know what *it is*, though we were never ſo much bound to it, yet are we not able; unleſs perhaps that God is the King and Lord of the Univerſe, and other ſuch like things; which if we ſpeak properly, belong not to his Eſſence. It cannot be denied that ſome of theſe things are diſcovered to us by the *ſacred Oracles*, but they are few, and ſome of them only ſhadowed out with obſcure Lineaments: and if there be *any*, wherein all *Chriſtians* are not agreed, they are at this day enwrapped with ſo many twiſted Thorns of *Sophiſters*, and alſo heretofore diſcuſſed with ſo much wrangling, that they are as yet doubted of by many. Adde hereunto the probable allegation of the Scriptures on both ſides; ſo that if one will hear both Parties without Prejudice, he will not for the moſt part ſo eaſily rid himſelf out of ſo great Intricacies. It is not my purpoſe to ſtretch my own Wit, to ingage in diſpute on either ſide. It is ſufficient if I demonſtrate, *that thoſe Queſtions that concern the more ſpecial Explication of the Divine Eſſence, and the accurate diſtinction of Perſons, although they be never ſo profitable, yet are not neceſſary to Salvation*: or, which is all one, *that a Chriſtian may arrive at the promiſed Goal of happineſs, although he be either ignorant of thoſe things, or (ſuch is the condition of our weakneſs) in an errour or miſtake about them.* If *Errour* in theſe things take not away Salvation,

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much leſs Ignorance. And therefore that there may be no ſuperfluity in this Diſcourſe, we will at preſent inſiſt only on the former.

When I conſider the way that bringeth us to Heaven, methinks ſuch contemplations as *theſe* are out of the Road of our Journey. For indeed, what maketh us ſufficiently, yea, abundantly fitted for *Eternal Life*, but *Faith working by Love*, for which only we ſhall be pronounced *Juſt*? But if one may have *this Faith*, although he have wrong conceit touching the Myſtery of the *Holy Trinity*, what hinders but that he may together with this *Errour* be received both into Heaven and into the Church? Now leſt any one ſhould be deceived in the Notion of *Errour*, I do not now give ſo mild a Name to their Wickedneſs, who whil'ſt the Truth was yet clear and open in the Church, and called into doubt by none, did *firſt* ſpread darkneſs over this *Article*; but to their failing, who in our times

Do fear the Greeks even when they offer Gifts.

That is, who having been cozened with ſo many Lyes and Cheats of *Antichriſt*, dare not believe him even when he ſeemeth to ſpeak *Truth*: as ſhall be further made appear by the ſequel of the Diſcourſe. Moreover that *perfit Faith* is not taken away by that *Errour*, we ſhall eaſily perceive, if we enquire into any part thereof. Nor verily ſhall you find in the whole Compaſs of our Faith, that more Duties are required of Believers, than *aſſent* to the Promiſes of Jeſus Chriſt, and *Obedience* to his Precepts. The firſt of which the Apoſtle *James*, cap. 2. very aptly intimateth to the *Body* of Faith; and the ſecond to the *Soul* thereof. To the belief of the Promiſes, that plain Confeſſion is ſufficient, which paſſeth under the Name of *The Apoſtles Creed*: and if there can be any thing elſe requiſite, I ſee not what can be added, beſides the *Reverence due to the Holy Scriptures*; to which, if *Credence* be once denyed, the certainty of our Salvation is brought into danger. Now whether *both* or *one* of theſe compleat the whole nature of that Faith, which is due to the Divine Promiſes, certainly Experience it ſelf teſtifieth, that ſuch as erre in the knowledge of the aforeſaid Myſtery, may excellently diſcharge this part of *Faith*. For they without any Exception give credence to the holy Scripture, and to the Apoſtles Creed. And therefore what is wanting to beget in them a full Belief, that God cannot chuſe but perform his Promiſe? For, that the things aforeſaid are ſufficient to the Belief hereof, is even from hence manifeſt. God hath promiſed us Salvation by his Son. To rely on this Promiſe, it is enough if we be perſwaded, that God both can & will give unto us what he hath promiſed. For by this means all the Cauſes of diſtruſt being pared a-

away, there will be no ground left to doubt of ſo great a Promiſe. But whil'ſt they believe the Holy Scriptures & (their Abridgment) the Apoſtles Creed, they cannot in the leaſt doubt concerning the Power or Will of God; when notwithſtanding they may miſtake in the knowledge of his Eſſence. Wherefore this firſt part of Faith is not taken away by that Errour. As for Obedience to the Precepts of Chriſt, certainly this can much leſs be taken away by ſuch miſtakings. For neither was it the purpoſe of God, by giving his Commandments to exerciſe the ſharpneſs of our Wit, but the Goodneſs of our *Will*. And therefore how blind ſoever our knowledge is in abſtruſer things, yet may our Will be conformed to the obedience of the divine Law, than which nothing is more manifeſt and open. Nor doth the *Piety* of ſundry erring Perſons, here need an Advocate, in that it ſufficiently pleadeth for it ſelf, and oftentimes ſheweth its Faith even in ſilent works, which very many vainly boaſting of, cannot find in their Life and Actions. Neither indeed hath any thing been enjoyned us, wherein our Vertue and Obedience may not ſhew themſelves. For what need is there to invite us with Rewards to thoſe things, which we willingly perform of our own accord? But they buy happineſs at a very *cheap rate*, who ſpend nothing but the Labour of their Wit upon it. For he that is never ſo wicked and careleſs of his Salvation, may know ſome *Truth* concerning God. Nor can we boaſt of our Obedience in ſuch things, unleſs we admit the damned Spirits to a ſhare in our Praiſe. Beſides, the nature of all Precepts ought to be ſuch, as that it might evidently appear to all, who are to perform them, that they are preſcribed. But how manifeſt this Doctrine touching the *Trinity* is, the *incredible height* of the very thing it ſelf ſheweth; and how manifeſtly it is *preſcribed*, the Labours and Contentions of ſo many *Fathers* and *Councils* heretofore teſtifie. Yea, though ſomething in this point were never ſo much enjoyned to be known and believed, yet none refuſeth to believe thoſe things that are expreſly extant in the Holy Scriptures: nor is there any one ſo *impious* as to contradict them. All the Controverſy is about *Meanings* and *Conſequences*, wherein an errour and failing doth no more infer Diſobedience, and conſequently *Damnation*, than the ſimplicity of an obſequious Servant, who not *rightly underſtanding* the command of his Maſter, did *yet obey*, as far as he was able. But if we may believe the *Promiſes* of Jeſus Chriſt, and obey his *Precepts*, altho we are miſtaken in ſuch a manner, what ſhall we want to the full poſſeſſion of a *Lively Faith*? Is there yet any thing in the nature of Faith, uncomprehended in thoſe two parts? But there is a wonderful ſilence in

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the Sacred Oracles concerning that third part; nor do I see how that Faith is not perfit, which is *Lively*; or how that is not lively, which consisteth in a manner of its Body and Soul. But you will say, that we are necessarily to believe many things, which are neither the very *Precepts* nor *Promises*. To which I answer, that they so belong to one of these, that without them neither can be rightly performed; of which sort is the *Omnipotency* of God, and the like *Attributes*, as also the *Creation*, *Providence*, &c. which though they be neither the *Precepts*, nor the *Promises*, yet cannot the belief of the *Promises* consist *without* them; so that an Errour in them is not now dangerous, but altogether *pestilent* and pernicious. But it hath been clearly proved that Errours about these Doctrines, touching which the whole Discourse hath been set on foot, subvert neither Member of Faith, at least in their own nature, and unavoidably.

CHAP. III.

That sincere Love towards God and Christ is sufficient to Salvation; and that the same may be in such as erre.

LEt us adde an *Appendix* to this Argument, which may even be instead of a *new* reason. Who therefore dares to condemn him to the punishment of Eternal Death, in whom liveth the sincere *Love* of his Creator and Redeemer? Or what more certain pledge of Eternal Happiness is there, than to love God and the Lord Jesus Christ, with the whole heart, and all the Powers of the Mind? This indeed is abundantly manifest, inasmuch as the sum of our Obedience lieth herein; which though it be not the *Cause* of our Salvation, yet is it at least the *way*, and an evident argument and most certain *sign* thereof. Now if it shall be made plainly to appear, that they, who are not able to extricate themselves out of those perplexed and craggy Questions, whereof we have spoken, may notwithstanding in the mean time *love God* and the Lord Jesus Christ, with all the Powers of their Mind; what cause will there be, why we should not think that the same Persons may be *saved? Logicians* say, that the next and *immediate Cause* (as they term it) cannot be hindred, but it will out of hand produce the *effect*. Let us therefore in the first place consider the next Cause of this Love; and then we shall see whether it may be in Men so erring.

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The perfit Love of any one is bred in the Minds of the Lovers, chiefly for three Cauſes concurring together. 1. From the firm and conſtant memory of ſuch Benefits as are paſt, and from the ſenſe of ſuch as are preſent. For *Gratitude* alſo is a part of *Love*. 2. From a certain *hope* and confidence of ſupream Happineſs to be obtained from the beloved thing, if you come to enjoy it. For Love languiſheth without deſire. 3. And finally from a perfit apprehenſion, as far as may be, of the Soveraign *Beauty* and excellency of the Object: which is the true and principal cauſe of the Love it ſelf. Now foraſmuch as neither the perfit Love of God, nor the perfit perception of his Excellency can *fully* happen to us in this Life: we mean not an *abſolute Perfection* of both, but ſuch as is the chiefeſt in its kind, namely, as great as can exiſt in this ſtate of Mortality. Nor do I underſtand, what can be further required unto perfit Love. For who ſeeth not, that our *Will* can no more abſtain from loving a perceived Beauty, than *Fire* from borning ſtubble put unto it? Which beauty, if it be *perfitly* ſeen, a *perfit* Love alſo will ariſe: but if no more than *perfily* in its kind, a Love alſo *perfit* in its kind, will ariſe. Certainly, if any one denyeth that Soveraign Love neceſſarily proceedeth from ſuch a Cauſe, he ſubverteth the Principles of Nature, which dictateth even to Children, that whatſoever ſeemeth good or beautiful, will alſo prove very pleaſing; and ſo Love will be increaſed according to the Meaſure of the apprehended Beauty. It remaineth that we conſider, whether ſuch a *perfit* perception of the Excellency of God and his Chriſt, accompanied with thoſe two helping Cauſes, may not be in them, who comprehend not thoſe hidden and abſtruſe Myſteries of the Divine Eſſence. Which if it be in us *who do not erre*, it may alſo be in them, or it will be neceſſary to ſhew a Reaſon of the Prerogative, which *we* have above them in this Behalf. And firſt, let us ſpeak of God the *Father*. As for the remembrance of his Favours, they acknowledge themſelves together with us to be obliged unto him, perpetually making mention of his infinite Mercies; the chiefeſt whereof conſiſteth in taking us for his Children. As for the certain Expectation of a very great *Benefit*, what vaſter *hope*, what laviſher *wiſh* can be fained, than that which they, together with us deſire and expect from the moſt high God? There remaineth behind the contemplation of his *Beauty* and *Majeſty*. I confeſs there is nothing in humane Matters ſo exact, that can lend a ſhadow to the Image of ſo great a Majeſty. Nevertheleſs as touching God the *Father*, they do in a manner agree with us. For we are able to conceive nothing ſo great and ſublime touching him, which they alſo do not conceive. Nor doth

doth it follow, that becauſe they do not reach the curious ſubtilty in the received diſtinction of *Perſons*, therefore they cannot according to their Capacity conceive the beauty of the Divine Countenance, not to be ſeen by prophane Minds; and conſequently dedicate and worſhip the Image of that unſpeakable Majeſty within the Sanctuary of their breaſt. As if it were a hard matter to have all manner of high conceptions touching him, whom you certainly know, and continually think to be the ſource and original of all Goodneſs and Beauty, althou gh you do not comprehend Doctrines ſnarled and entangled with ſo many knots. Enongh ſeemeth to be already ſpoken touching God the *Father*. But what if they have like, yea the ſame Cauſes with us of Love towards the *Son of God*, will any thing hinder them from being as capable of this Love as we our ſelves are? Let us begin from *Hope*. Do they not expect the ſame bountiful Right Hand of the Lord Jeſus, which will hereafter reach out heavenly reward to all the Faithful? Do they not luxuriate in this wiſh? And who can chuſe but feel his heart wounded with the Love of Chriſt, who ſetteth Chriſt before his Eyes, as giving him the pay of his Warfare? But you will ſay, that in making an eſtimate of his Favours they ſeem to be injurions to him, whil'ſt they affirm, that the Fathers anger towards us was appeaſed without the *Entermiſe* of Chriſt, and that no *Price*, properly ſo called, was paid for our ſins. For I Perceive that almoſt all, who in the Article of the *Holy Trinity* diſſent from us, are of that Opinion. I *defend* not the opinion of the Men, nevertheleſs I perceive that they judge a *Redemption*, properly ſo called, to be both abſurd, and impoſſible. What derogation therefore is it either to Gratitude towards the Lord Jeſus, or to the holy Memory of his Merits, if they imagine that he did not thoſe things for our Sakes, which could at no hand be done; when in the mean time he abundantly performed all other things which might proceed from him towards us? For no other thing is required to the moſt ſtrict obligation of a benefit, than that the Benefactor do for ones ſake all that he is able. But they acknowledge that the Lord Jeſus did for our Salvation ſpare no pains, yea, not his very Life. And though they do not think that his blood was ſpilt to appeaſe God, and therefore not ſo rigidly to make *ſatisfaction* for our ſins, yet do they hold that it was ſpent and given for our ſakes; ſo that although they aſſert another ſpecial ſcope and effect of his death than we do, nevertheleſs they ſeem to acknowledge the *ſame merit* in general. And who would not be imbued with a moſt tender affection towards him, whom he ſuppoſeth to have undergone a moſt bitter death for his Life's ſake? Who would

not

not moſt ardently love him, whom he thinketh perpetually buſied in conferring benefits upon him? To which, if you add an Expectation of Supreme Happineſs from his hands, it cannot now happen otherwiſe, but that the Mind ſhould melt in the reſentment of a moſt dilicate flame. I come now to the *Excellency* of the Lord Jeſus, which being imperfitly conceived by them, ſeemeth unable to excite a perfit Love of it ſelf. For how great a diminution is it of his Majeſty and Nobility, to have all that taken away from him, which he had from all Eternity? The Queſtion is not now, whither their Opinion be *right*, who think that all power both in Heaven and Earth was at a certain time given to the Son of God, whereas he was formerly nothing but the *Word* and chief Prophet. But if true Love be converſant about the things that are preſent, and not about ſuch as are paſt, (for neither doth this affection look backwards, to embrace the things that have been heretofore) certainly it is more to the purpoſe to conſider, what they imagine touching his *preſent*, than what they conceive touching his paſt ſtate and condition. For as Beauty being quite extinct, excites no Love of it ſelf, becauſe it flouriſhed heretofore: ſo if the ſame be at preſent very happy, it cauſeth never the leſs love and admiration of it ſelf, becauſe it was not ſuch formerly. What therefore do they attribute to our Saviour at preſent? Even *a Majeſty equal unto God the Father*, and ſuch excellency as riſeth up above the higheſt pitch that can be imagined. For they ſerve and worſhip him as the onely Son of God, as a *True God*, and diſpoſing all things with his beck; who deſcribeth the Laws of the Univerſe according to his pleaſure; who layeth tasks and commands upon the bleſſed Natives of Heaven; who with the bridle of his invincible power reſtraineth the Spirits baniſhed out of Heaven; to whom the Stars and Elements willingly yield obedience, and who finally hath the very nature of things tributary to him, from whence he levyeth the tax of his Church, and the aſſeſment of his People. Now what derogation is it to his Honour, that he is beholding to his Father for the Fortune of ſo great a Dominion? Which thing even we our ſelves dare not wholly deny. Will the Opinion touching the Excellency of our Saviour flag in the Judgment of our Love, when we ſhall erect the eyes of our Mind to his ſo ſublime Majeſties, who is fairer than the Stars and all light, and more glorious than the World it ſelf? Why ſhould I now commemorate his immenſe Goodneſs and Wiſdom, and his other divine Splendour, at the ſight whereof the eyes of our Mind grow dim? Why ſhould I recount his other praiſes, at which the Poverty of humane language waxeth dumb? All which they without

they, without any tergiverſation aſcribe to Jeſus Chriſt their Saviour, although they otherwiſe erre in their Opinion of him. Now we muſt either hold that thoſe things are not ſufficient to excite Soveraign Love towards God the Father, and his Son : or that they cannot poſſibly be in *thoſe Men* of whom we treat, if we ſuppoſe them uncapable of being touched with that holy ardour. Of which twain ſince neither ſeemeth probable, there is no queſtion to be made, but they alſo may be raviſhed with that heavenly love, and ſo delivered from *Eternal Deſtruction*, and put in poſſeſſion of Heaven, if ſo be they perſevere therein unto the end.

CHAP. IV.

That though Faith and the Holy Spirit be the Gifts of God, yet erring Perſons have, and may have them.

YEt ſome body may juſtly make a doubt, if *Faith* be the *Gift of God*, and ſuch a perfit and entire Love ought to proceed only from the Impuſion of the *Holy Spirit*, with what warrant we attribute that to the Power of the receiver, which lieth in the *meer pleaſure* of the donor. For if we have *Faith* no other way than from the liberality of God, and that happeneth not to every one, certainly the benefit of ſo great a Gift conſiſteth in the meer good-pleaſure of the munificent donor. Now, ſhall we little *Manikins* preſcribe a Law to his moſt free Arbitrement, according to the form whereof he muſt of neceſſity make good this Bounty of his to a certain ſort of men? Or ſhall we arrogate that to our power, which the ſacred Oracles place in his hand? But is it credible that he will laviſh out ſo excellent Gifts, (I ſpeak of *Faith* and the *Holy Spirit*) on men depraved with ſo many Errours, and imbued with perverſe Opinions concerning him? Admit they are *naturally* capable of ſo great a Good, yet ought they not preſently to promiſe to themſelves *this Grace of God*, which no man, that was in his Wits, did ever imagine to be due to the *deſerts* of men, much leſs to the perverſeneſs of ſo many *Errours*. To which I anſwer: Had I to do with none but them, who exclude all action of our free reception from the donation of *Faith*, or imagine that Eternal Salvation is in good earneſt promiſed to *fewer* than it is outwardly offered, it would be ſuitable to handle theſe matters in this place more largely. But now forasmuch as not a few of the *Reformed* count thoſe Errours, it

would croſs the deſign of my Diſcourſe to digreſs and expatiate very far. It ſhall ſuffice to have touched a *few*, and thoſe not of the beſt Arguments for Opinion, but ſuch as firſt occur at preſent. In the firſt place therefore we muſt chuſe one of theſe twain, either to imagine that eternal Salvation is upon condition of Faith really promiſed unto all, to whom it is *preached* and *offered*; or that God offers that to certain men in *word* and *tongue*, which he hath decreed not to perform in *deed* and *truth*. Whoſoever ſhall make choice of the latter, I intreat them that they would invent a *new name* for this thing, or confeſs it under the old name, to be *Hypocriſy*, that is, *guileful diſſimulation* and *deceit*, what they imprudently aſcribe to the moſt High God. But I have little to do with ſuch as had rather God ſhould be taxed and convinced of evil diſſembling, than themſelves of *Errour*: and therefore I lay this firſt ground of my Anſwer; that God is *faithful*, & willing ſeriouſly to give *Eternal Happineſs* to whomſoever he offereth the ſame by the Preaching of the Goſpel, unleſs men themſelves be wanting to their duty. But he hath excluded none of thoſe, to whoſe ears the voice of ſo joyful a Meſſage cometh, deſiring to gather even thoſe that are *unwilling*, if ſo be they leave off their *unwillingneſs*. Now if God in the preaching of the *Goſpel* hath promiſed *eternal Salvation* promiſcuouſly to all who deſire to attain it, he hath alſo promiſed a *means* tending to this end, which are on his part neceſſarily required. For he would be ridiculous, who ſhould promiſe to a Begger that he would preſently give him an Alms, and in the mean time be careleſs, yea unwilling to put his hand to his Purſe, that he may reach out what he hath promiſed, eſpecially if the Beggar can receive that Alms no other way than by his reaching of it out. Nor can he be ſaid truly to promiſe any thing, who reſerveth to himſelf a free power to beſtow ſomething, without which, what he hath promiſed can by no means be *received* and acquired. Far be it from us to have ſo impious a thought towards God, as that we ſhould ſuſpect any evil concerning the reality of his words. To whomſoever he hath promiſed any thing, he hath truly and ſincerely promiſed it, nor will he circumvent any ones credulity with any ſlights and put-offs. Nothing drove him to the Indulgence of ſo great a benefit, but his own *Good Will* towards Mankind. Wherefore he is favourable to his own Gifts, and leaveth no Impediment to them, ſo that now nothing can be wanting on his part to the *attainment* of them, which he doth not willingly impart to all. Whereby it cometh to paſs that the Gift of Faith, and whatſoever God conferreth to the office of *Believers*, although it be, like the very Salvation it ſelf,

ſelf, *free* and *voluntary*, and no ways deſerved, yet it is denyed to none, who having heard the *Conditions* of the *New-Covenant*, doth willingly aſſent to them, and is not wanting to himſelf in ſo great mercy of God: which I would alſo have underſtood concerning *all Spiritual Gifts*, without which his Promiſe cannot be acquired. For I will not deny that there are ſome, to the promiſcuous beſtowing whereof he hath ingaged his Faith to none; which lying out of the direct road that leadeth to the Kingdom of Heaven, are not pertinent to the thing in hand. But the Conditions which are on Gods part required to the nature of the *New-Covenant*, are already, or ſhall certainly be fulfilled by God: all that remaineth is, that the other party will be mindful of ſo holy a ſtipulation, and both *believe* and *obey* this *Covenant*. Which latter, ſince it may agree to this ſort of men, whereof we ſpeak, as hath been made evident from the precedent Diſcourſe, what is there lacking unto them, being compriſed in this tranſaction of God with Men, to the full Freedom and Property of all the Gifts and Promiſes? For the *Errours of the Underſtanding*, eſpecially in things not concerning the very nature of the *Covenant*, cannot hinder them from *reaping* the fruit thereof, in that (as we have already ſhewn) the knowledge of thoſe thidgs is out of the *Conditions* of the *Covenant*, (that is *lively Faith* and *Obedience*) and therefore may be abſent and depraved, whil'ſt in the mean time thoſe *Conditions* remain intire. But of theſe things we will more largely treat in the enſuing Chapter.

CHAP. V.

That nothing but Diſobedience and Unbelief exclude a Man from Eternal Salvation; and that ſuch as erre are free from theſe. Whether bare Errours of the Underſtanding damn a Man.

WHat it is lawful for Almighty God to do towards Mankind, is queſtioned by none, that is not ignorant of his *abſolute* Dominion. What he is willing and wont to do, and how he ordereth and guideth his Commands, and the whole *Common-wealth* of the World, with Rewards and Penalties, is a thing right worthy to be taken into conſideration. Certainly we are all born in a Kingdom, which is by the Goodneſs of the moſt high God made ſo mild and pleaſant to us, that all the ſweetneſs of *Liberty*, is ſordid in compariſon thereof. But he ſheweth himſelf a Father, in ſtead of a Lord and Prince, unto a

great part of Men, of which alone we will at present discourse. For we who have heard the voice of his Promises, are all called from the meanness of our Rank to the Condition of the *Divine Adoption*. To enjoy so great felicity as it is *happy*: so to miss it, is very wretched and calamitous. It therefore very much concerneth men, to foresee by what steps they may be tumbled down from so great a height. And they who have already got up so high, that they have a hope of *Eternal Salvation* upon the *Conditions* of the *New-Covenant*, cannot be pulled down from their station but by *Unbelief* and *Disobedience*. For since in this last *Covenant* nothing is required of us besides a *lively Faith*, concerning which we have formerly spoken, certainly we can by no other means violate the *Holy Engagement* of that Compact, than if we become destitute of that very *Faith*, which cannot be done without the crime of manifest *Disobedience*. For it is enjoyned and commanded us, unless we had rather *perish*. And what else is *Faith* than *Obedience to God under a certain hope and confidence of his Promises*? As, *Abraham* being called, obeyed by *Faith*, Heb. 11. 8. Wherefore if this one Rock of *Disobedience* be avoided, we have no cause to fear the *Shipwrack* of our *Salvation*. It now remaineth to be considered, whither *bare Errours* of the Mind are *Disobedience*. That they are not so, is even from hence apparent; because they consist in the mistaking of the Understanding, but *this* in the *pravity* of the Will. Again, since God regardeth not the actions themselves, but the *mind* of the *Agents*, who seeth not, that they who desiring from their hearts to obey, yet through *Errour* and *Imprudence* do not so, cannot be justly accused of *Disobedience*? A Servant doth not refuse his Service, if not rightly apprehending his Master's Will, he fulfilleth it according to his understanding; much less may he be punished for *Disobedience*, and that with eternal Punishment. Nor doth God so much regard the effect, as the *decree* of our Counsel. And if you look to the event of the thing, neither did *Abraham* indeed obey God, commanding to sacrifice his Son *Isaac*, yet did he obey in his heart and mind. For he was *willing* to obey God, and did all he could, being prohibited by the Angel to do the rest, *Gen.* 22. Suppose it be commanded that we believe the true Explication of the Holy Trinity. Such as *simply erre*, do not indeed obey this Precept, for they dissent from such as are *Orthodox*, yet do they obey in their Mind and Heart, because they are willing to believe, and do believe all that which they think to be true, although they do not hit in all things the genuine sense of that which is true. And so they do what they are able, being hindred by Ignorance from doing

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more. But you will say, *that Ignorance* is gross and affected. I excuse not that which is *affected*, such as was in them, who whil'st the Apostles were living, or their Successours, did erre willingly, and of set purpose. For this was meer *Malice*. But they who after so great darkness had bespread the Church, do not discern the *rising Light* from counterfeit torches, cannot be said to sin out of malice and through their own Fault, as shall also hereafter be more largely handled. But what if it hath been shewn that it is *not commanded*, nor pertaineth to the Nature of our Faith and Obedience? Shall they presently be disobedient, who do not fully understand a *Mystery*, which is no where commanded to be fully understood? In short, whether they, who are called *Socinians*, do sin out of a bare Errour of Mind, we shall see hereafter. It is sufficient for me at present to evince, that *bare errours* of Mind are not punished by God with *eternal Punishment*, under the *New Covenant*. Elegant is that of *Bernard*, *Nothing burns in Hell, but our own Will*. For it only is capable of receiving the filthiness of Sin: for which in the whole Universe there hath been no place, unless God had left to intelligent Creatures, a free and entire will. Unless (I say) God had discharged the Will from all condition of servitude, all proof of *Vertue* had perished together with the license of sinning. Although very many had rather acknowledge God the *Author of Sin*, than the bounteous giver of this Liberty. Of which Liberty, notwithstanding it is an evident sign, that we abuse it alone to the license of sining: so that the failing of our *Understanding* deservedly seemeth worthy of commiseration and pardon, whereas the pravity of our *Will* deserveth hatred and Punishment. It is therefore no wonder if God punisheth *this* rather than the *other*, with *eternal destruction*; because in *this* there is place for *guilt*, in the other only for *Imbecility*. But he never punished Imbecility and Ignorance for *Contumacy*, especially with extream and everlasting Punishment. Likewise in the Law of *Moses*, whereof he was so severe an exactor, as that he ratified the reverence of one Ceremony with the blood of a Man that went to gather sticks, *Numb.* 15. Yet did he leave Pardon for *Errour*, and a refuge for *Ignorance*, and that in the most grievous Crimes, which concern the Life and Safety of a Man. The rigour of the *Mosaick* Law pardoneth his offence who killed a man unawares, and granteth him a repeal after the death of the *High-Priest*. And why should not also the lenity of the *Christian Covenant* absolve the Fault of such as erre, after the death of Christ our *High-Priest*, whose Yoke is sweet and bur-

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den light, and who refuſeth not to disburthen and eaſe us of the load of our ſins? who hath left on Record in the latter end of his Teſtament, how worthy of Pardon he accounted *Errours*, whil'ſt in the cruel nick of his death he prayed for thoſe that erred, *Luke* 23. Indeed to pray for them who *ſin unto death*, it is not lawful: nor would the Lord ever have done *that* amidſt the ſacriligious boldneſs of ſo great a Crime, had he not taken pity on their unhappy Ignorance *Forgive them*, ſaith he. For what reaſon? Becauſe *they know not what they do.* Now if in the ignorance of ſo great a *Murder* there remained, even in our Saviours Judgment, ſome place for Pardon, ſhall we, with our Cenſures damn to eternal Puniſhment the meer clouds of the Mind, and harmleſs Ignorance? But you will ſay, ſhall we hold that *Ignorance* and *Errours* are never puniſhed with everlaſting Deſtruction? What ſhall become of the Souls of ſo many thouſand *Infidels*? what of thoſe barbarous *Braſilians*, and others of that ſort? The greateſt part whereof have not had ſo much as a ſuſpition touching God and Chriſt. Shall we ſay that theſe ſhall be puniſhed for *Contumacy*, who know not any Law, from whoſe obedience they may revolt? Shall not the Ignorance of God and Chriſt in them undergo everlaſting Puniſhment? In the firſt place, I deny that they are in any ſort puniſhed, to whoſe ears the ſound of the Saving Doctrine never came, and ſay, that they are only left in that wretched condition, to which they were liable by their very *Birth.* For inaſmuch as the Puniſhment of our *firſt Parent* derived the moſt wretched ſtate of eternal Death to his Poſterity, God might according to his Wiſdom and good pleaſure exempt whom he would from this miſery, leaving the reſt in the ſame. For who ſhall preſcribe a Law to his abſolnte power? or ſet bounds to his Clemency? Thoſe therefore, to whom he hath revealed his Law, he puniſheth as *Rebels*, unleſs they obey, not with any new kind of Puniſhment (eſpecially after Death) but only leaving them in their miſerable ſtate together with the reſt. Others to whom he hath not vouchſafed ſo greas a Benefit, he leaveth indeed in the ſame ſtate, but doth not *therefore* puniſh. For the reaſon of eternal Death, as it is to be called a Puniſhment, conſiſteth not in the appointment of a new Puniſhment, but in a certain ademption of the Divine Grace, which migh*s free* them out of the ſervitude of the old Puniſhment; which certainly is not taken away from them, to whom it was never offered. But ſome one will reply, Why ſhould thoſe wretched Ignorants be in the ſame Condition with the *Impious* and *Diſobedient*? As if God were

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unjuſt towards *thoſe*, becauſe he uſeth Clemency towards *theſe*. Doth the Lord of the Vineyard do wrong to the Labourers, when he recompenſeth the unequal merits of ſundry Perſons with one reward, not by taking ſomewhat away from them that were more deſerving, but only by adding ſomewhat to them that were leſs deſerving? *Mat.* 20. But if ſomething may be added to their *Reward*, who are leſs deſerving, without wrong to thoſe who are more deſerving; ſomething alſo may be taken away from their puniſhment, who are more deſerving, without wrong to them who are leſs deſerving. Suppoſe that one hath promiſed liberty to *Titius* his Captive upon a certain condition, without promiſing any thing to *Sejus*. *Titius* for his Contumacy loſeth the Reward, receiving nothing from his Maſter, but remaining Captive and miſerable together with *Sejus*. Can *Sejus* now complain, that he being innocent, endureth the ſame things with *Titius* who was diſobedient? *Titius* may rather acknowledge the clemency of his Maſter, who would content himſelf with the meer ademption of the Reward. As therefore innocent *Sejus* is not puniſhed by his Maſter, although he be left in the ſame miſery with guilty *Titius*: So neither ſhall the ignorant *Braſilians* be hereafter puniſhed by not receiving that which was never promiſed to them. Theſe may rather ponder on the grievous Puniſhment of their Contumacy, who ſee their Salvation, and pine away for having forſaken it. We have, I ſuppoſe, ſhewn ſufficiently, that ſuch Ignorants, whereof we ſpeak, are *not puniſhed*. But if we grant that they alſo are puniſhed, ſhall they be preſently puniſhed for their Ignorance? As if that Ignorance were that which ought to be puniſhed, and is not it ſelf rather a certain Puniſhment. Who knoweth not that God oftentimes avengeth *Wickedneſs* and *Crimes* with *Errrours*. Who would not reckon ſuch Ignorance amongſt the horrid Puniſhments of God? This therefore will remain to be enquired further, for *what cauſes* he hath puniſhed them with ſo great blindneſs? But who hath known the thoughts of the Lord? Or who hath been his Counſellor? There is no cauſe why any one ſtould fiſh this Secret out of me, but that I certainly know that God proceedeth ſlowly and unwillingly to Puniſhment, and that every one is undoubtedly the Author of his own Deſtruction. Of all thoſe that were wicked, and included under Sin, the moſt High God might take pity on *ſome*, and puniſh others. So that the cauſe of this Puniſhment ſhould, as it ſeemeth, be ſought for, not in the *Ignorance*, but the *Wickedneſs* of men, and in the ſpecial good-pleaſure of the wiſe God. Let us proceed further. Suppoſe thoſe barbarous *Braſilians* to

be

puniſhed for *Ignorance*. What is this to *our Errours*? Their Ignorance taketh away all *Faith*, *Religion*, and *Piety*. We ſpeak of bare *Errours* of the Mind, which are ſo far from weakening *Faith* or *Religion*, that they ought, under the Penalty of everlaſting deſtruction, to be free from all contagion of Wickedneſs. Finally, admit that the *Braſilians* are puniſhed for the bare Ignorance of their *Mind*, (which notwithſtanding we do not grant) ſhall we therefore ſay that the ſame Ignorance is puniſhed by God with ſo grievous and bitter a puniſhment in our erronicus ones? The puniſhment of thoſe doth infinitely differ from the puniſhment of theſe. It is an eaſie matter to loſe ſuch things as the Mind with a flattering hope *never promiſed* to it ſelf. The *Reward* of Eternal Life is not promiſed to them, no *hope* of Immortality given them, no *taſte* of everlaſting joy offered to them: they never endeavoured to enter in thorow the ſtrait Gate; to deny themſelves; they have not attempted to bear their *Croſs*; to follow their Saviour thorow the afflictions of this World. But the greateſt part of them who erre through the bare Imbecility of their wit, have omitted nothing to the moſt certain hope of Salvation, and to all the toyl of a *pious life*, and to the tolerance of Chriſt's Croſs. Shall we imagine that theſe ſhall for their meer *Ignorance*, and the *miſtakes* of their Underſtanding, be diſcarded from the forethought and foretaſted expectation of eternal Joy? Shall we think that their labours ſhall be in vain, and their *Hope* and *Faith* vaniſh into ſmoak? Certainly this would be a moſt wretched condition, and not to be compared with that puniſhment of thoſe *Barbarians*. So that it can at no hand ſeem probable to any man, who ſetteth before his eyes the *infinite Grace* and *Mercy* of God, eſpecially under the *New-Covenant*, that ſuch *Ignorance* ſhould have ſo ſevere a Puniſhment inflicted on it.

CHAP. VI.

That the things neceſſary to be known unto Salvation, are few, and very ſimple, and eaſie to be underſtood by the ſimpleſt. Such is not the common Doctrine touching the Trinity.

THere are not wanting ſome, amongſt ſo many *Families* of *Chriſtians* who imagine certain particular men, whom they call *Reprobates*, to be by Name excluded from the Heavenly Inheritance; yet do the

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Opinions of almoſt all diſſenting Parties herein agree, that the way to Salvation is before hand ſhut up and obſtructed to *no ſort* of men. And indeed, not without good reaſon. For ſince they are all equal in the ſight of the moſt High God, and no mans Dignity exempteth him out of the condition of the reſt, there is no reſpect of Perſons with God, no regard of Eminency. He vieweth not the minds of men thorow thoſe Coverings of the Body, or thorow the Dreſs and Ornament of the outward Fortune, but naked and ſequeſtred from all diſguiſes; and therefore the condition, which is for the moſt part without the verge of the Man himſelf, ought to difference none before him. As for the Counſel therefore of the great God, all are alike deſtinated to Eternal Happines, whether they be Men or Women, Young or Old, clad in *Scarlet*, or courſer *Wool*; having ſo much Land, that they cannot count it, or having no Land to count; in ſhort, whether they be born to Rule, or Servitude; exerciſe Liberal or Manual Arts, all are promiſcuouſly and in the ſame degree called to that Heavenly Inheritance. How few of all theſe can penetrate into thoſe abſtruſer *Secrets* of ſublime Doctrines? And therefore by the moſt wiſe Counſel of God, the Heads neceſſary to Salvation are ſo ordered, that they may, without any pains, be underſtood and comprehended by all. Howbeit that Doctrine, touching which the preſent Diſcouſe is intended, is ſo *intricate* and hard, and doth ſo far ſurpaſs the apprehenſion of the ſimpler ſort, that very few of them can promiſe Salvation to themſelves, if it be prejudicial to any one to have a *Miſunderſtanding* of theſe things. For the Queſtion is not concerning the *Holy Trinity*, which all confeſs and adore, even they who are nick-named *Samoſatenians*; but touching the Differences of *Eſſences* and *Perſons*, touching the Communication of Properties, touching thoſe Myſteries which no man ever ſaw, nor ſufficiently underſtood. Theſe things riſe up ſo high above our Imbecility, and ſo great a crop of Thorns and Briars ſpringeth up when they begin once to be diſcuſſed, that Nature ſeldom produceth ſo happy a Wit, as can in good earneſt rid himſelf out of that Brake. If any one of the duller ſort (and who ſeemeth *acute* enough for ſo ſubtle things) ſtick in thoſe Bryars, why ſhould we Impute that to his *Wickedneſs*, which is due to the *weakneſs* of his Wit? The very ſublimity of the things, argueth their difficulty, as alſo the Excellency of the *Object*, which never was, never will be comprehended by the Mind of Man. And therefore not long after the Apoſtles time, a great bickering about theſe things

diſturbed the whole World, and did ſo exerciſe the Wits of the Fathers, that after ſo many toils and Councils, neither did all agree with one another, nor every one with himſelf. By ſo much eaſier a task it is to ſearch the Majeſty of God, than *comprehend* it. Which curioſity, how fatal it proved to the World, let us believe the Complaint of *Hilary*, who pronounceth the Biſhops of *France*, *happy*, in that they had neither forged nor received, nor known any other *Confeſſion* than that old and moſt ſimple one, which had from the Age of the Apoſtles been received in all Churches. O that we had rather be happy with thoſe *French* Biſhops, than by being *over-wiſe*, diſturb the Quiet of the Church, or baniſh out of Heaven ſuch Souls as are incapable of ſo great Myſteries! How many men *truly pious* and ſimple ſhall you find, who are not able to maintain and defend their own *Opinion*, though ſometimes true? If theſe happen to doubt of the truth, or through Imprudency to ſlip in ſuch Matters, ſhall they preſently be excluded from the Entrance both of Heaven and the Church, as Enemies of God and Chriſt? What ſhall the wretches do, whil'ſt often times they hang in ſuſpenſe between a great ſhew of *probability* on both ſides? And why ſhould not the knowledge of ſuch things, as are altogether requiſite unto Salvation, be as obvious to the *Simple* as to learned Wits? Hath God paved an eaſier way to Salvation for the *Learned* and *Ingenious*, than for others? Nor is it very material, that the ruder ſort may apprehend by the teaching of the more Learned, what they perhaps of themſelves cannot attain unto. For ſince among the Learned themſelves there are ſo many *Controverſies*, either the ruder ſort ſhall judge of them by their *own* underſtanding, which is all one (for 'tis as hard to determine between the Arguments on both ſides, as between true and falſe Opinions) or ſhall hand over head follow the authority of others. But if the choice of the true Opinion exceedeth their ability, ſo that they are altogether inforced to follow others without any premiſed deliberation; what fault of theirs will it be, when they are miſtaken? Therefore they ſhall either be puniſhed *guiltleſs* for the fault of others, or if they periſh *guilty*, their only offence will be this, namely, that they are ſomewhat *dull*; which is ridiculous. For let us ſuppoſe, what often cometh to paſs, that there are certain ſimple men of an innocent Life, and who according to the power of their mortality, live *piouſly* and *devoutly*: let us alſo ſuppoſe what often falleth out, that there are *Learned* and *Ingenious* men, but overwhelmed with ſins and and treſpaſſes. In both, perhaps God may find juſt cauſe of Puniſhment: but he ſetteth not ſo high a eſtimate

mate on *Wits*, as to deal more ſeverely with *better Men*, only for their rudeneſs, than with the worſt of men, and ſuch as by their very Ingratitude for his Gifts provoke his vengeance. But he ſhould deal more ſeverely with *better* men, were a certain and infallible way to Salvation quite ſhut up to them for the dulneſs of their Wit; and only an uncertain and ſlippery one, depending on another's wit or piety, left them. And if, on the the contrary, wicked men, ſo they be ingenious, have always, (if they pleaſe) a priviledge to go thorow the right and ſaving Path. But you will ſay, God is bound to none, and when he findeth in both a cauſe of juſt ſeverity, though not equal, he may according to his own good pleaſure, proſecute his right in thoſe, and pardon theſe their greater ſins. I anſwer: What God may do is not here ſo much queſtioned, as what he *will, and is wont to do*. And therefore though we ſhould grant, that he may do this, yet would it not as yet appear, that he will, and is wont to do ſo. For God may do many things towards Men, without Impeachment to his Juſtice, which othewiſe his *wonted Mercy* ſeemeth not to permit. But would not a reſpect of Perſons be by this means apparently aſcribed unto God, if before him *Learned* Men ſhould be in a better condition, than *Simple* Ones? And yet notwithſtanding he is wont to reveal his Myſteries, not to the wiſe of the World, but to the Simple and Ignorant, as the face of the *Primitive Church* witneſſeth, which had very few *Learned* Men: which very thing evinceth the Condition of ſimple Men in point of Religion, to be, if not better, yet at leaſt equal to that of the *Learned*. I am ſorry to dwell longer on a thing ſo evident. For theſe things cannot be obſcure to any one but him, who being puffed up with a vain confidence of himſelf, and his Knowledge, hath quite evaporated and breathed out all *Charity* and Mildneſs of Chriſtian Forbearance. And therefore ſuch as erre are oftentimes by us accuſed of *Wickedneſs*, not that they themſelves erre grievouſly, but becauſe they think us to erre grievouſly. Our *Pride* may ſeek what Pretences ſhe pleaſeth, yet doth ſhe for the moſt part plead her *own* Cauſe: and a great part of thoſe that erre are condemned and anathematized not ſo much for their own ignorance, as for their *diſſent* from us.

CHAP. VII.

That there is not in this Life a perfect Knowledge of God, and of Divine Myſteries, but in the other Life; and that Faith, Hope, *and* Charity *are Sufficient to Salvation.*

IF in the buſineſs of our Salvation a difference were made between the very work of our Felicity and ſuch *means* as tend thereunto, we ſhould eſteem fewer things as neceſſary to be known, and a far eaſier courſe might be taken to repair *Concord* in the *Church*. Whereas now, whil'ſt we confound the *means* with the *end*, it cometh to paſs, that in a prepoſterous Order we will have that which was firſt in the *Intention*, to be alſo firſt in the *Execution*, when notwithſtanding the means do in their nature ſo follow the end, as to go before it in time. What is it to which the deſire of the nobleſt minds aſpire? Even the pleaſure of eternal Joy, which Man's Mind cannot ſo much as conceive, without the exact Knowledge of God. But that Contemplation, happy even to Envy, awaiteth us in the Heavens: nor can the narrowneſs of our earthly temper in this frailty comprehend it. As therefore he would be ridiculous, who ſhould hope for the fruit of Soveraign Happineſs in this Life: ſo are we alſo ſeized with a very fooliſh humour, whil'ſt in this *Inne* of our Mortality we require of all the ſuiters for Heaven, a *perfit Knowledge* of God's Nature: which is not a taſte or handſel of our felicity, but the *very top* and complement thereof. If the capacity of our Underſtanding doth (as hath been ſaid) in vain attempt to comprehend this fully on the Earth, it is fit that we, together with the Apoſtle, (1 *Cor.* 13.) knowing and propheſying in part, expect the *Perfection* that is to come. But with what Spaces ſhall we circumſcribe that wandring and *imperfit Knowledge*? It is the ſafeſt way to ſet thoſe Limits thereunto, which the very nature of the *New-Covenant* hath appointed. Namely, that we chiefly and neceſſarily inculcate on all, only that Knowledge of God and Chriſt, without which thoſe things cannot conſiſt, which are required of us by vertue of the *New-Covenant*. Of which ſort are a *firm Confidence* placed in God and his Chriſt, together with a *Hope* of his *Promiſes*, and *perfit Charity*. All theſe things are eaſily conſiſtent with thoſe Miſtakes about the ſubtle ſearch into the Nature of God and Chriſt. Moreover the greateſt difficulty in ſuch diſſentions, is for the moſt part wont

wont to ariſe about the State of our Saviour, before he repaired the *Lapſed* Condition of Men. Howbeit, if we make a true Eſtimate of the matter, although this Myſtery of his Eternity be true and altogether Divine, yet doth it not properly belong to us, to whom he hath preſented and revealed himſelf a *Mediator* in a humane Nature and Condition only. So that they are altogether worthy of excuſe, who ſee and look upon him only in that part, wherein he ſhewed himſelf to Mankind. For as they loſe not the Rewards of a *Covenant*, who do not exactly know and comprehend his *Nature*, with whom, and by the entermiſe of whom, they enter into league, ſo that they know both ſo far forth, as the reaſon of the *Covenant* and common utility requireth. So neither ſeem they exclusible from Heaven, who in the Knowledge of God and Chriſt the *Mediator*, want nothing to the reaſon and obſervance of the *New-Covenant*, although they riſe not up to the ſublimer Contemplation of both. Eſpecially ſince the greateſt part of them, who at this day recede from the common ſenſe of the Church in ſo great a matter, are not out of any *raſhneſs* ſo perſwaded touching the Son of God, but rather out of a *pious fear*, leaſt they ſhould detract from the Father ſomewhat of his Honour. Wherein, if they unwittingly offend againſt the Son, out of Love to the Father, (ſo that Improbity mingle not it ſelf with their Errour) it ſeemeth very credible, that the *Son* will, for the very *Love of the Father*, forgive them this Errour. For he gave a notable proof of his Meekneſs, when he prayed for his *Ignorant Murtherers*, as we alſo did before hint. What, think we, will he not do for the Love of the *Father*, who for the *Love of Men* forgave ſo great an Injury to his Enemies? Now if he out of Love to Mankind, doubted not to aſſume the Form of a Servant, and really to endure extream Diſgraces, certainly he will bear with the *Errours* of Men, who do not conceive worthily enough of his Majeſty and Dignity, eſpecially that which is paſt. Will he, who for the ſakes of Men did of his own accord debaſe himſelf to the *loweſt Condition*, puniſh them for this very thing, namely, becauſe they out of Ignorance think more meanly of his *Condition* than is fit? Eſpecially, when he himſelf by his Debaſement, did in a manner give occaſion of ſuch Ignorance. Certainly it is incredible that he who of his own accord underwent for the Sins of Men a reproachful kind of Death, will not pardon to humane weakneſs a ſimple Opinion, that derogates ſomething from his antient Excellency, if ſo be the *Errour* be harmleſs, and removed from all

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Sin of Malice. More might be said on this occasion; but neither is it my intention to say all things, and what hath been spoken, will suffice courteous Judgments. As for *Moody* Dispositions, we may sooner *wish* than *hope* to bring them from their inbred Prejudices. Now let us descend to such things as are more special.

CHAP. VIII.

A General Apology for the Socinians, *that they are not of such a Perswasion out of Ambition, Avarice, Pleasure, or Superstition, nor offend out of any Malice, but only out of the Care of their Salvation.*

AY me! what *Contumacy* is this, and scorning to obey, that we Men depart from our heavenly Allegiance in nothing sooner, than *that* which hath most acurately been enjoyned and prescribed? Doth that unhappy *Exile* of Heaven, soliciting the Earth to a Society of Rebellion, tempt us in that part chiefly, where he may make us most guilty of *Treason*? Or rather, did the divine Providence more strictly command that, wherein he most suspected our Obedience? Whatsoever it be, certainly the more frequently mutual *Love* and *Good-will* is enjoyned us in the sacred Oracles, the more obstinately do we refuse it. And (which is the more to be lamented) we follow them as Guides herein, who ought at no hand thus to go before us, I mean such Teachers of Religion, who being cozen'd with the zeal of *Inhumane Piety*, make it a part of our Duty to *hate* Dissenters. A great part of them beginneth to hate the *Persons* before the *Vices*, and (which is a thing very unjust) under a pretence of the *publick Cause*, they exercise *private Hatred*. Yea, further, to an inexpiable and most hateful War, the bare *name* of Parties is sufficient: and in a preposterous Order, the Judgment here followeth hatred and Enmity, as elsewhere it doth *Love*. Besides, it is prejudical to the *Truth* to have been uttered or defended by such as erre; nor is Virtue valued at her worth in them, who have been once *blasted* with the suspition and prejudice of *Errours*. No *Honesty*, guilty of the least *Heresy*, is safe in the Church of *Rome*: nor is the Honesty of a *Catholick* more gently dealt withal amongst *Protestants*, who being themselves also divided into sundry *Factions*, with proud determinations denounce *Heaven* or *Hell* to one another. There is

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no remembrance of Mortality; no pardon to miſtaking, any where. Although you offend not in your *Manners*, yet is it a capital Offence to trip in the Underſtanding of Divine Matters. Yet hath the publick hatred of the World more eaſily conſpired againſt no ſort of men than againſt thoſe who commonly paſs under the Name of *Socinians*, or *Photinians*. Certainly an *unhappy Race* of Men, and amidſt ſo many Injuries and Reproaches, honeſt in a manner *gratis*. For neither do I excuſe the *Errours* which they hold. The thing I wonder at is this, How men ſo diſtant from all ambition and avarice, and innocent in all the parts of their Life, ſhould be ſo grievouſly miſtaken. To aim at high Matters is the undoing of very many Wits, born and framed to the beſt things. But this vice, ariſing from the deſire of Glory, hath there no place, (if other luſts be abſent) where Ambition findeth not room enough for her ſwelling to expatiate in. For what man, being well in his wits, would promiſe to himſelf a *Name of Renown* amongſt the moſt contemned and univerſally hated part of the ignoble Vulgar? Who would ſeek after the Rays of an illuſtrious fame amidſt the Darkneſs of Obſcurity, who might find it in the light and Sun-ſhine? As we ſee very many of them might do, whom neither the ſplendor of their Birth, nor their Wit and Learning exempteth from a voluntary debaſement. Nor can you juſtly charge them with *Avarice*, a great part of whom doth generouſly deſpiſe all means of growing *Rich*; and you ſhall hardly find any where, either *poorer* men, or ſuch as by the Rule of their *Sect*, are neceſſitated to give more than they. There remaineth *Superſtition*, whoſe timerous nature always condemneth anothers Liberty, in that which ſhe her ſelf doth with a ſcrupulous Religion refuſe. Certainly *Superſtition* is either baniſhed from amongſt them, or hath there put off that which was in her nature moſt odious, ſince they in all their Doctrines *ſo diſſent* from others, as that they exclude none either from eternal Salvation, or from *Brotherly Communion*, but ſuch an one as is a Patron of manifeſt *Vice*. Which very Carriage wipeth away even the leaſt ſuſpition of *Pride*, which never debaſeth her ſelf unto ſo great modeſty, as not to preſcribe that truth, which ſhe arrogateth to her ſelf, to be held and obſerved by all others almoſt under a Form: ſo that I am utterly unable to find out *the Cauſe*, why they ſhould expoſe themſelves to the cruel hatred of all, and to dangers, unleſs it be an ardent deſire to pleaſe God, and ſtudy of true Piety. In which regard they are worthy of more Pardon, if any diſaſter befall them in the ſearch of ſublime things. For indeed I cannot apprehend what it is that inflameth us with ſo implacable

cable prejudice againſt them, when neither the ſweetneſs of *Fame*, nor the ſpur of *Riches*, nor the allurements of a *diſſolute Life*, but only the ſollicitous care of their Salvation, hath caſt them into theſe ſtraits. We ought rather to favour the Wretches, and reach forth a ſaving Right-Hand to them, even *againſt their will*. Whereas now on the contrary, we *reject* them ſuing for our favour, and had rather hate and abominate than *inſtruct* them in a friendly manner. But by what right, or for what demerit of theirs? Is it becauſe they defend things, which they conceive to be true, with ſo great prejudice to their Honour and Security? What? would we have them ſacrifice their Faith and Conſcience on the pleaſures of others? Or is it becauſe they think thoſe things to be *true*, which are *falſe*? Truly we are very injurious to mortality, if we ſuppoſe the Errours and Failings of our Mind to be Crimes. You will ſay, *They ſin of ſet purpoſe*: and fall not caſually, but by a voluntary ſlip. But who told you ſo? Or who hath diſcovered to you their intimate Counſels? Certainly not *Charity*, which is an Enemy to evil Surmiſes, but bitterneſs and malignity of Spirit, which is apt to make a ſiniſter Conſtruction of anothers meaning. Although they had no evident proof of their Innocency, yet in a doubtful matter, and ſuch as is known only to the *Judge of Hearts*, it became us not to make any ſad decree againſt them. How much leſs can they be condemned, when there appeareth nothing that might invite and drive them to ſo wretched and dangerous malice? We ſhould at leaſt here make uſe of that notable Saying of *Piſo's*, *For what Advantage is this done?* For if they be neither ſeized with a longing after Honours and Riches, nor with an Itch of Pleaſures, nor can have any hopes of earthly Solace; and if they conform their Life to the Preſcript of that moſt *Holy Law*, where lyeth the Incitement to ſo great Improbity, as that they ſhould purpoſely procure to themſelves ſo many troubles, together with eternal Deſtruction?

CHAP. IX.

An Anſwer to the Objection *about rejecting the Conſent of the Church, for the Authority of the Scripture only.*

BUt you will ſay, That they have been ſo daring, as to queſtion a Myſtery for ſo many Ages ſince received by *all* the Chriſtian World with great applauſe, and venerable for its very Antiquity, and la-

ratified by the authority of ſo many Holy *Fathers* and *Councils* : and ſo are come to the very height of wickedneſs, in attempting to diſcuſs with ſacrilegious curioſity ſuch things as ought to be believed. The reprehenſion then is this, that they have *begun* to make a doubt of ſo certain a thing. But what ? Is it unlawful to buſie your wit about a thing of undoubted Truth, that after a more ſtrict examination, you may the ſooner impetrate aſſent from your ſelf ? Certainly it is a diſparagement to the Truth, if we ſuppoſe her to be afraid of Men's Judgments. For neither is it unbecoming her to plead for her ſelf at the Bar of *Reaſon*, that ſhe may bravely overcome, and draw the very Judge to her ſide : whereas if ſhe decline the Tryal of this Court, ſhe ſuffers not a little in the confidence of her cauſe. For though we may not enquire into the Truth of the *Divine Oracle*, yet we both may and ought into the true meaning thereof : and they ſeem Slanderers, who ſay that the *Socinians* believe not the words of the *Scripture*, becauſe they doubt of the received ſenſe. But what if they ſeem alſo to have juſt cauſes of *doubting* ? For they conceive that the *Holy Fathers*, and the conſent of ſo many Ages, do add more Dignity and Veneration, than *Streſs* to the Doctrine of the *Trinity*. How well grounded this conceit is, I diſpute not. However, certain it is, that they are not the firſt who have charged the publick authority of the Church, and the conſent of many *Synods* and *Ages*, with the Suſpition of very great Crimes. For ſince they ſee the foreſaid authority in many other things of great moment, not only *Accuſed*, but alſo convicted of *Falſhood*, what ſo hainous Crime have they committed, who dare not entruſt their Faith and Opinion of Divine Things unto her ? For of ſixteen *Ages*, the *twelve latter* cannot warrant many things to the greateſt part of *Chriſtians*. It cannot be denyed, that the *Socinians* going further than others, do alſo reject the conſent of the *four* former, but eſpecially of the *third* and *fourth* ages. For ſince the Truth hath found little aſſurance in humane authority for ſo many Ages of the loweſt antiquity, they thought that their Opinions were to be ſquared *only* by the Rule of the Holy Scripture. Wherein truly they could not erre ſo greatly, but that they had a far greater cauſe of erring. For what could the Faith of the Church, being once ſuſpected, ratifie to them ? How could they know that the *Chriſtian* World hath groaned under the Darkneſs of Errours *no longer* than for ten or twelve *Ages* ? Or that thoſe antient times had any priviledge above the following Ones, ſo that they could not erre ? They ſaw them to be Men, yea, ſuch men as were,

alas! defiled for a great part with *vices* and *crimes*. Nor could they be ignorant of the factions amongst the *Nicene* Fathers, nor of their ovident ambition, nor of the *evil arts* of sundry others, nor of the shameful *Errours* of men, otherwise most holy. And though it were to be held, that about the three hundredth year of Salvation, the Church did still retain the primitive Truth, yet in so many dissentions and so many adverse Councils, they judged that at least the choice of the truer Opinion did pertain to themselves. In chusing which, they ought not to follow the Judgment of the successive Church, which had been already justly condemned in many Points of Faith, but the *infallible* Rule of the holy Scripture. For how could the Church warrant unto them the opinion of others, when she was not able to make good her own. Besides, they called to mind the *Genius* of that age, and the dispositions of those Fathers, concerning whom that great man *Justus Lipsius* in our age wrote, *That many did then so put on Christ by an outward Profession, that in their Minds they did not put off* Plato. And therefore they not without cause suspected, that in many heads of Doctrine, *plain words* were wrested to *forrain* & *Philosphical senses*, whilst the Fathers did with ingenious Comments tack the mysteries of their *Philosophy* to the *Word of God*, that they might not seem to have learned in vain. For what should be the cause, say they, that touching the received Explication of the Holy Trinity, *Plato* and *Trismagistus* speak *more clearly* than the sacred Scripture? Or what reason should there be, why the Scripture should more timerously and obscurely deliver *so holy a Mystery*, than the foresaid *Philosphers*? These and the like things, though they do not acquit them of *Errour*, yet do they clear them from the Imputation of *rashness*. For nothing is more certain, than that the Doctrine of Christ is not built on so weak a foundation, as some constitute in humane authority. Now did we heretofore wrest *these Arms* out of the hands of *Papists*, that we our selves might use them against others? Certainly it becometh not us, either to take *their* Weapons, or deliver *ours* up to them: but when we are summoned to the Tribunal of the *Holy Scripture only*, we ought not to yield this praise to the Adversaries, that they should seem to hope better than we concerning the *Equity* and *Favour* of so great a Judge.

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

An Answer to three other Objections: a Comparison of Calvin's Doctrine touching Fatal Predestination, with the Doctrine of others.

But it will be further *objected*, that the *Socinians* impiously contradict the manifest words of the sacred Scripture, and scornfully reject the clear Truth coming in upon them. To which I answer, That whatsoever pains and travel they undertake in this Business, is employed, not against the *Holy Trinity*, (as they are unjustly defamed) nor against the Sacred Scripture, but against the humane Explications of both. Hence we may see that they willingly assent and give credit to all the Sacred Oracles touching this matter, only rejecting certain Interpretations and Forms, sprung up certain ages after. They believe they are according to the Command of Christ, *to be baptized into the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit*, Mat. 28. They believe *those three sacred Witnesses in Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit*, 1 Joh. 5. They acknowledge, *that in the Beginning was the Word, and the Word was a God*, Joh. 1. Yea, such a one, *to whom all Power in Heaven and Earth was given*; as he speaketh of himself, *Mat.* 28. It would be tedious to reckon up all the Scripture-Testimonies of this kind, to which they give credence without any exception. Those hard and subtil Opinions concerning the *Essence* and *Person* of God, concerning the communication of *Properties*, and others of that batch, they either understand not, or think them repugnant to the simple and plain Word of God. Give us leave, say they, to be ignorants of such things as are believed with danger. In these so subtil and thorny Explications, if they, after the manner of Men chance to *erre*, shall they presently be termed the Enemies of God and Christ? Shall there be found no pardon for an Errour in so great difficulty of things, no excuse for blindness? Which notwithstanding we ingeniously seek, even for the greatest Crimes, though we be never so well provided of means to avoid them. Are they, who out of Ignorance and Errour violate the *Edicts* of Princes, acquitted from the Crime of Treason? and is that offendeth about the *Divine Oracles*, in our Opinion, have no re-

ſuge for his weakneſs in the mercy of the Heavenly Father? But you will reply, that their Blaſphemies are horrid, wherein Impiety leaveth no place for pity; and reproachful againſt the Son of God, and overthrowing the Foundation of *our Faith*. To which I anſwer, that if there have been any amongſt them of a more intemperate Tongue or Quill, they are *infamous* not only with us, but alſo with them. But what is here meant by the *Foundation of Faith*, I do not ſufficiently perceive. It hath been abundantly evidenced before, that ſuch *Errours* do neceſſarily take away neither our *Faith*, nor our *Salvation*. For it is not the Foundation of Salvation to know his *Eſſence*, who hath promiſed the Salvation to us, ſo that we have no impious and contumelious Opinion of him: as the ignorance of the Nature of the Promiſer taketh not away the certainty of the Promiſe, unleſs he hath promiſed us any thing under the condition of ſuch Knowledge. As for the knowledge of the *Father*, they therein do in a manner agree with us. They likewiſe adore and reverence with Divine Worſhip the *Son of God*, as the Author and Mediator of their Salvation, the Heir and Lord of the Univerſe, and the General of our *Warfare*. But you will here reply, that they deny his *Eternity*. I anſwer, that they, together with holy *Paul*, care not much to know any thing but *Jeſus Chriſt, and him crucified*; and had rather, with ſo great an Apoſtle, reſt in the ſimplicity of this Knowledge, than either with *Arius*, to aſcend to *Non-entities*, or with *Athanaſius* to *Co-eſſentialities*. As for the Honour which they give to the *Holy Spirit*, the greatneſs thereof appeareth, in that they ſcarce diſtinguiſh him from the Supream *Father*. Shall they then be ſaid to blaſpheme againſt theſe, if they be ſomewhat miſtaken in the other Knowledge of them? Indeed many Opinions are drawn out of their Doctrines, that the wretches may be loaded with more Envy, and that by them, who whil'ſt they are ſo vigilant in other mens *Errours*, are faſt aſleep in their own. But if all the Chaff were to be ſifted out of humane opinions, I would wiſh that a great part of the *Reformed Churches* would labour to defend their own Cauſe, before they undertake to oppoſe that of others: but thoſe above all, who have from the age of *Chryſippus* recalled down to theſe very Times that ſecret and inevitable Law of *Fate*; and who hold alſo, that the Sins and deſtruction of Mankind, and finally all and ſingular motions and impulſions of our Will, proceed from the decree of eternal Deſtiny; to whom this falſe perſwaſion alſo ſeemeth to be fatal. From which Opinion, if we lay aſide prejudice, more, and more ſhameful *Errours* will be deduced, than

than out of the Books of the *Socinians*. For which is more reproachful unto God, to hold that he is one as well in *Perſon* as *Eſſence*; or (that I may cloathe naked *Injuſtice* with ſoft words) to bring him in puniſhing men, for *not doing* thoſe things, which by his own procurement were impoſſible? Is it more abſurd to conceive that there is one *Eſſence* of the Father, another of the Son, than that God (I tremble to ſpeak it) hath one thing open in his tongue, and another thing, contrary thereunto, ſhut up in his breaſt? This is reproach enough to the moſt High God, although we do not adde, that this diſſimulation is joyned with deceit? Is the dignity of the *Holy Spirit* more traduced, whil'ſt he is ſaid to be only the *Vertue* and *Power* of God; than the *Goodneſs* of God, whil'ſt he is held the *Author of Sin?* Which conſequence doth alſo flow by a fatal and inevitable flux from that Doctrine of Fate. For he that decreed men ſhould neceſſarily ſin, certainly would have them ſin: otherwiſe he would have decreed a thing againſt his own deſire. Now he, whoſe *Decree* and *Will* the *event* doth immutably follow, may certainly be termed the Cauſe of that event, whether he affect it by himſelf, or by *another*. Finally, is it a greater derogation to the dignity of Chriſt, to deny *two Natures* in him, leaſt we ſhould make him two Perſons, than to the Wiſdom of God, to affirm that he would perſwade men to that, whereto nevertheleſs he hath not perſwaded them, namely, that he would give Salvation unto *all*, when notwithſtanding he hath deſigned it only to a *few*? Truly, if we look more narrowly into the matter, the Doctrine of the *Socinians* touching the *Holy Trinity*, is not to be actounted ſo much *evil* and *impious* in its own nature, as *imperfect* and *maimed*. For it ſeemeth to aſcribe to the *Holy Trinity* nothing falſe or abſurd, but only to take away ſomething that is true, namely, the *Divine Nature of Chriſt*, and the *proper Perſon* of the *Holy Spirit*. Whereas this *Doctrine* touching the fatal Predeſtination of particular men, laboureth not with any defect, but with manifeſt *pravity*. For it not only offereth Injury to God by moſt unworthy Calumnies, but alſo ſtriketh at the Foundation of our Faith. For to omit *Security* and *Deſpair*, with which two *Rams* it battereth the Wall of our Piety, it wonderfully weakeneth the very *Belief* of God's Promiſes, whil'ſt it bringeth in God wickedly diſſembling, the more is the grief.

CHAP.

CHAP. XI.

Reasons and Examples for tolerating Hereticks; and who are true Hereticks.

TO what purpose speak I these things? Namely, to shew that there is no cause, why we should not think that they ought to be tolerated in the Church, whose tenets, either by themselves, or for their absurd *Consequences*, seem scarce tolerable, so that they do not wilfully ascribe some impious thing to God, and testifie their Love towards the Lord Jesus Christ, by obeying his Commandments. For although both the Patrons of the forecited Opinions did build unprofitable, yea, damnable *Tenets*, as it were *hay* and *stubble* upon our *Foundation*, which is Jesus Christ; yet, as it hath been also shewn at the beginning, the *Tenets* which they through Errour have brought in, shall be destroyed by *fire*, whil'st they themselves in the mean time (unless some other thing hinder) shall, as the Apostle testifieth, 1 *Cor.* 3. obtain *Pardon and Salvation*. Neither indeed ought we to refuse or scorn their Communion, whom God will receive into the Society of eternal happiness; nor should we hate them on earth, to whom eternal Love in Heaven is due. We are unworthy to bear the Title of God's Children, if we disdain to be their *Brethren*, whose *Father* God desireth to be. But if we be afraid of the contagion of such Errours, either in behalf of our selves, or rather of the *weaker ones*, in the first place we may not thereupon renounce brotherly Love, which we owe to them, although they erre. For we ought not to forsake a certain and clear *Duty*, least an uncertain evil should happen, nor to pursue even the most holy Ends by unlawful means. But secondly, that fear is vain. For if we have not the Truth, there is little danger to be feared from them, much less if we have it. For since they maintain their *Tenets* with no *Arms*, nor with any force and think it not so much as lawful so to do, nor set them off with any carnal allurements, certainly the Truth can never be by them either oppressed with *force*, or overthrown with *fraud*, inasmuch as the nature of truth is such, that like to *Eagles Feathers*, she devoureth all other light plumage of Opinions, never withdrawing her self from us, unless she be tyred either with our Servitude, or Sins. Which twain being not to

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be feared by us in a modeſt liberty of diſſenting, and ſtudy of true *Charity*, what cauſe is there why we ſhould ſo warily fence our Opinions from their *Tenets*? Let us rather be poſſeſſed with a certain hope, that as earthen Veſſels being joyned with thoſe of Tin or Silver, are broken to pieces: ſo alſo if God the author of peace ſhall bring back into the Church that happy tolerance, all *falſe* Opinions fighting hand to hand with the *true*, will be daſhed to ſhivers and periſh. Otherwiſe, if we ſo much fear that mutual patience, and friendly conference, we do not think well enough concerning the goodneſs of our Cauſe. Heretofore when the dawning of *Goſpel-Light* was returned, *Luther* and his Followers would have wiſhed that they might be tolerated in the *Communion* of the *Roman* Church. But it concerned the Pope to ſecure his Darkneſs from the approach of the Morning. Again, when a diſſention was riſen up between the *Lutherans* and the Reformed, who was it that refuſed the form of agreement that was offered, but he that doubted of his Cauſe? Now alſo in the very Reformed Church it ſelf, upon the diſſention concerning *Fate*, none are more diſpleaſed with tolerance, than they that ſuſpect the truth of their *Doctrine*. Would *Errour* were ſo circumſpect in the Cradle of its Infancy, as it is provident, being once grown up. But it being blind when it is born, doth afterwards become ſharp-ſighted, foreſeeing its fate afar off, and eſchewing it, and is never more ingenious to prolong its Life, than when it is preſſed with the conſcience of its own weakneſs. But you will ſay, ſhall we acknowledge a *Heretick* even for a Brother, when the *Apoſtle*, Tit. 3. commandeth us to avoid him after two or three admonitions? Why ſhall we be more merciful than the *Holy Spirit*? Let not that Mercy turn to our Miſery, when once the Lord beginneth to require at our hands the Souls of ſo many ſeduced Innocents. Shall we not eſteem him a *Heretick*, who in ſo great a matter departeth from the ſound *Doctrine* of the Church? Do we not think our own *Doctrine* ſound? How often have they been admoniſhed both with Writings and Diſputations, and yet nevertheleſs ſtick to their Errours as to Rocks? I anſwer, Let none pleaſe himſelf ſo much, as to vie with the Apoſtolical Meekneſs. It is an incurable Member, that the Apoſtle enjoyneth to be cut off from the reſt of the Church's Body. Howbeit there may be Errour in them that undertake the Cure, and they themſelves may be overſpread with much darkneſs. For neither can the *ſound* part be always diſcerned from the diſeaſed one, and the one doth oftentimes deceive us with the Diſguiſe and Image of the other: And tho

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it be never ſo manifeſt what part is entangled with a true Diſeaſe, yet doth it ſometimes remain to be ſcanned, whether it be to be cut off, or cured with *mollifying* Remedies; for thoſe Members only ought to ſuffer amputation, wherein the *Gangrene* leaves no place for a milder Medicine. Nor is the Apoſtle of another Mind, when he commandeth many Admonitions to be premiſed before *Excommunication*. And leſt it ſhould be doubtful whom he deſigned by the Name of a *Heretick*, he ſubjoyneth Arguments thereupon, which are indeed effects of the *Heretick* himſelf, but unto us impulſive Cauſes, that we may avoid him. For he ſaith, *That ſuch an one is overturned, and ſinneth, being condemned of himſelf.* And leſt any ſhould think that theſe are indeed impulſive Cauſes, but not of our fact, and our avoiding, but only of the Apoſtles Injunction; ſo that he indeed for theſe Cauſes excludeth every *Heretick* from the Communion of the Church; but yet it is not neceſſary for us to have reſpect to them, he premiſeth the Participle, *Knowing*; to intimate that we alſo ought to know the Cauſes why we *diſcommon* any of the Citizens in that Heavenly *Common-wealth*, nor haſten raſhly to ſuch Proſcriptions, but after we have certain knowledge of ſo great *malice* in them. And truly although the Apoſtle had not added this, yet did very *Charity* and the Analogy of our Religion, dictate ſo much unto us. For this is a great puniſhment, nor to be inflicted but on ſuch as ſin evidently. And foraſmuch as in ſo great a matter no *Errour* can be little, we ought firſt of all to be aſcertained, that the Man to be condemned is worthy of ſo rigid a ſentence, namely, ſuch an one, as is here painted out in his Colours. Which not belonging unto men, who go aſtray from the common road, out of *meer Ignorance*, or injury of the Times, what ſhall we do to them that make uſe of this exception? Shall they who in theſe calamitous times, in this deſolation of the *Church* (being born a great while after the *Riſe of Antichriſt*, and not able fully to diſpel the Darkneſs of that long Night) turn aſide into By-Paths, be judged to ſin out of perverſity of Mind? Where now is that Royal *High-way*, thorow which the Godly may paſs ſecurely on with an unerring foot to Salvation? If it lyes in the *Authority of the Church*, ſhe hath now for many Ages been beſet with the Snares of *Antichriſt*. We wonder that they are afraid of the ſuſpected Faith of the *Church*, when they do the ſame after our example, and in ſo great danger to fear even all the things that are ſafe, is a point of prudence. And we ſtill dare to upbraid them with raſhneſs in depart-

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ing from the common Doctrine, when they seem to do it out of a just and well-grounded fear. But if this way consisteth in the *Authority of the Holy Scripture*, they do not stray from it, whil'st they, together with us, honour those Sacred Books with due Reverence. But you will say, that the right and *Orthodox sense* of the Holy Scripture is rather the only Path, that is able to bring us to the very Citadel of *Truth*. I confess that this way was heretofore worn with the publick going of *Christians*; but now, being first hidden with the springing Briars of *Antichrist*, and therefore trodden by very few, and not as yet discovered by having all the Brake cut down; & besides, called into doubt by so many intervening false Paths, it hath not as yet recovered the Name & *Nature* of a *Royal High-way*, which it had for a long time lost. And therefore the greater pardon is due unto such as deviate from the same. For neither do they erre through desparate Malice of heart, who do not always walk therein amidst so many cross-ways and turnings. Let any one reckon up to me all the Sects of *Christian-Religion*, and I will say he is a brave fellow, if he omit none. In so great a concourse of Opinions, if they have not chosen the truer, who will say, that this is rather done out of Improbity, than out of Ignorance? For by what Argument, after so many Errours have been introduced, ought the *Truth* to lie open to their view? By the unanimous consent of the Church? O unanimous consent, amidst *six hundred* different Sects! You will say, that in the Doctrine contrary unto them, the *greatest* part are *agreed*. But this is nothing, since they have also agreed in very many Errours. So that we must again seek out a priviledge for the Doctrine of the *Trinity*, whereby it came to pass, that though men erred in other points, yet could they not mistake in this. But if we suppose that they ought to examine all Opinions by the Rule of the Holy Scripture, and afterwards to chuse the truer; they have done both, save that in the latter they have not followed that which *indeed* was, but only that which they *thought* to be truer. Which certainly is an *Errour*, and no malice; nor can they be said to sin *Self-condemned* in holding such an Opinion, for which they are ready to lose their Life and Fortunes. For neither doth he condemn himself, at least in his Conscience, who in the midst of cruel tortures hopeth for *Eternal Life* from God, as the Reward of defending the Truth. Wherefore since we are not certain, that they are perverse and self-condemned, but well assured that they are not such, even from the *Death*, which they willingly undergo for their Errours; and since such Errours (as hath been before

proved) do not ſubvert *Eternal Salvation*, it ſeemeth that they ought not to be ſegregated from the Communion of the Church, if they will teſtifie their Love towards the Lord Jeſus, by obeying his Commandments.

CHAP. XII.

What Hereticks are to be Excommunicated, what not? And a fuller Apology for thoſe who in our Age paſs for Hireticks.

BY this reckoning will ſome ſay, How few *Hereticks* muſt be Excommunicated? Who will not invent plauſible pretences for his Pravity? There is no Doctrine ſo *abſurd* and *peſtilent*, which being palliated with that Cloak of *Errour*, may not creep into the Church. To which I anſwer, that there is no cauſe why we ſhould be ſollicitous leſt we ſhould have no occaſion to uſe this rigid Law of *Excommunion*. Would the Church had even at this day no *voluntary Rebels* againſt the Divine Majeſty. But neither in the times of the Apoſtles were there men wanting, who ſubverted either our Faith in God, or the hope of Immortality, or the Piety and Love that is enjoyned us, and ſuch as did not by Deductions and Conſequences, but with *open face*, as they ſay, vent Blaſphemies and Impieties. Whoſe endeavour and impiety is not ſo obſcure, but that it is apparent that they were conſcious to themſelves of their Pravity and Fraud. As if any one ſhould deny the *Reſurrection of the Dead*, who ſeeth not that ſuch a Man, after he hath viewed the clear and certain Sentence of the holy Scripture, will be convicted in himſelf, although he may perhaps diſſemble it? There is the ſame reaſon in the Patron of ſome apparant vice. All which being manifeſt, (for ſo are the *Works of the fleſh*) and *manifeſtly forbidden*, ſuch a man hath no ſtarting-hole in the ambiguity or obſcurity of the ſacred Scripture, unleſs he disbelieves the ſame, and ſo overthrow all Religion. Whoſoever therefore brings into the Church ſuch *Doctrines*, as do in their own nature ſubvert our Salvation and Faith, they are deſervedly commanded to depart together with the former, not only leſt they ſhould hurt others, but alſo becauſe they themſelves, as hath been ſhewn, are of incorrigible Malice and Perverſity, and conſequently, ſelf-condemned. For a *Chirurgeon* doth not preſently ſear or *cut-off* an

an infected part, because it may with its contagion, hurt the rest of the Body, but would first have that very part cured of the *Infection*: which if it doth not succeed, he then cuts it off as incurable. But those *Doctrines* that stand not within the *Boundaries* of necessity to Salvation, are such, that an errour in them, especially in this disturbed state of things, cannot be taxed of wilful pravity, nor can it either damn its Author, or exclude him from the Bosome of the Church. But some one will here object, Shall we brand with this Spiritual Censure the obstinate Maintainer of none, even the greatest *Errour*, if so be it overthrow not our Salvation? But there are many things, which though in their own nature they take not from us our Salvation, yet do they *by degrees* so undermine and weaken the same, that afterwards it falleth down of its own accord. And do you like it, that *such Diseases* should be cherished in the Church? To which I answer, that I would have these Distempers cured without *Wounds and Cauteries*, especially because the *Truth*, unless it be oppressed by force, or *scorned* by men, who are blind with the Love of Vices, is never wont to be Supplanted by those pernicious *Errours*; yea, this Daughter, and Foster-Child of *Time*, always growing *stronger* with very age, doth with the beams of her light dissolve and melt all the waxen Arguments of *Falshood*, unless one of those twain before mentioned, doth hinder: both which ought to be banished from the true Church of Christ. For since by force, or the allurement of our affections, as well *Falshood* as *Truth* may be promoted, (if yet Truth may be so promoted) but by a free *Dispute* in mutual Love, only *Truth*; and *Falshood* sometimes putteth on the Vizor of *Truth*; it is a safer course to keep this way only in the Church, which having shut out Errour, lieth open to *Truth*, than whil'st we endeavour by all means to insinuate *Truth* into men, to leave and prepare an Entrance for *Falshood*. And therefore to cashiere the lighter Errors, (for the Objection speaketh not of the lightest) the Care and Vigilancy of the Pastors is sufficient; who will find that the love due to erring Persons, will no whit retard them in pulling up *false Opinions* according to their ability. However, should it never so much be granted, that in the Infancy of the Church, and in her following growth, these Errours, which outwardly appear somewhat light, but inwardly contain very much, were not tolerated, yet will it not be evinced from thence, that they ought not at this day to be tolerated in the old Age of the Church. For they deceive and are deceived, who model our times by the

pattern of that flouriſhing age. The crazie health of the Church cannot be reſtored with the ſame remedies. Many things ſtifle a diſeaſe in the birth, which when it is grown up do foment it. When the Church was ſound and luſty, in the prime flower of her age, and whilſt the *Colledge of the Apoſtles* was yet living, even violent remedies were to be uſed towards her, becauſe of her vigour. Whereas now being ſpent with diſeaſes and old age, and become feeble, ſhe doth in a manner ſink under the weight of her prevailing ſickneſs, and is never in more danger, then when ſhe falleth into the hands of *Cruel* Phyſicians. Heretofore her former vigor did admit the opening of a vein, and taking away of Blood: but now after her ſtrength hath been exhauſted with ſo many Maladies, if their be any vital juyce remaining, it cannot be let out, but the very life and ſpirit will iſſue forth together. Believe me, ye that talk of nothing but Launcets and Cauteries, will with your unſeaſonable Phyſick *kill the Church*, if ye let out that little Blood which is remaining, in this nick of time which ſhe ſeemeth to be almoſt a dying. Whatſoever remedies have been invented for the health and conſervation of the Church, as this is touching the puniſhment of *Hereticks*, ſhould they, as prudence teacheth, be omitted, when they bring more hurt and danger, then profit. For why deſire we that the people of God ſhould like a lump of moulding ſtuff be further crumbled into infinite pieces? What end of Schiſms will there be, if a promiſcuous diſſent be ſufficient to make a rent? Why take we pleaſure to behold not the *Coat* only, as a Great man wrote, but the *very Body* of Chriſt, whereof he is the Head, to be cut and torn in pieces? But let the reſpect of profit take place: let us ſee whether it be lawful for us at this time to chaſe thoſe erring Perſons from the communion of Chriſts Church. For there is a wide difference between them, and *thoſe Hereticks* that were contemporary with the Apoſtles. For ſuppoſe them, who now-a-days err in matters of Faith, to make their appearance before the reverend conſiſtory of the Apoſtles and their Aſſociates; ſuppoſe them to be often convicted and admoniſhed, and nevertheleſs to perſiſt obſtinate, though in the leaſt error, who would not deteſt their *Malice*? Certainly a very ſlight error would now be tranſmitted into the nature of a wicked crime. And why ſo? Becauſe they durſt *reſiſt the holy Spirit* ſpeaking by the Apoſtles: and when they had *no cauſe* to queſtion the Doctrine and Faith of that moſt ſacred Councel, unleſs they would withal queſtion the whole Chriſtian Religion, yea, did not give credence thereunto,

nor

nor obey it, and nevertheleſs would be accounted Chriſtians. What madneſs, what wickedneſs, what perverſneſs was it, when by this very incredulity they do ſufficiently teſtifie that they were *not Chriſtians*, as who denyed belief to the Apoſtles and their Aſſociates, and yet under a pretence of Chriſtianity, did peſter the Church with deceit and lyes? Beſides, the malice of ſuch men was in the beginning far more manifeſt, in that a blemiſh may ſooner be diſcovered in a clean Body, then one that is ſpotted. And therefore it was an eaſie matter to eſpie and puniſh the wickedneſs of ſuch men, as did turn aſide out of the common road, that never had been called in queſtion. But now though we have a very ſtrong perſwaſion concerning the certainty of our Faith, yet who hath herein given us caution, or ſecurity, that we *cannot err*? What Councel can he at this day imagin ſo corrupt, as that of the Apoſtles, or the Primitive Church? And yet how many Preſcriptions may you behold in this age? how many Degrees, whereby men for the ſlighteſt matters exclude one another out of Heaven and the Church? I ſpeak not theſe things, as if I thought any queſtion were to be made concerning the *ſoundneſs* of the Orthodox Opinion: but to make it plain, firſt, that we ought *more timorouſly*, then the Apoſtles heretofore, to condemn ſuch as are tardy in this behalf; and ſecondly, that we ſhould not in light matters be *over-confident* of our knowledge and perſwaſion, and finally, that even in weightier things, provided they do not ſubvert our Faith in the Lord Jeſus, and the obedience of his Commandments, we may and are bound to tolerate the weakneſs of ſuch as err. For what matters it, for me certainly to know that I hold the ſaving Doctrine in theſe points, if this be not manifeſt to all Chriſtians, or if I cannot always very clearly demonſtrate the ſame to him that erreth? Have not all a far juſter cauſe of queſtioning the true Opinion now-a-days, then heretofore in the time of the Apoſtles? And ſuitably a man very eaſily ſlip in ſuch things through *Imprudence*, which heretofore could not be done without the intervening of extream *Impiety*. Nor is there need of Malice for continuance in error, where prejudice is ſufficient, and a ſuſpicion of error firmly imprinted in the mind againſt the patrons of the true opinion. Which certainly may eaſily ſeiſe even on an honeſt heart, eſpecially becauſe every ſect of Chriſtians inſtil into their partiſans at the firſt a hatred and abhorrency of others, and from their very cradle ſow in their hearts their own Tenets, which having once taken root, can hardly be pulled thence

in their riper age. Now what cruelty is it, to cast out of the bosom and lap of the Church, such Persons as are studious of *Honesty* and *Truth*, ye seek an agreement only for those Errors, which have been implanted in them without any fault of theirs, and do not overthrow Salvation? But they are *Hereticks*, and to be avoided, as such who are condemned of their own Conscience. Yea, for the fore-alleadged Causes they are *not condemned* of their own Conscience; and therefore neither now to be avoided, nor Hereticks. Or if we take no compassion on them, yet let us at least take pity on the very *Truth* which we defend, whose growth we envy, first, because we drive others from a nearer prying into her; and next, because we teach by our own example, that she, if charged with false suspicions, of right may, and ought to be excluded by other Christian Churches.

The Postscript to the Reader.

LEst the following Papers, Christian Reader, being left empty, should beguile thy sight, I have thought good in this place again to bespeak thee with a word or two. By this time thou hast perceived our mind and drift, which both the author of this Discourse had before his eyes when he wrote it, and I also when I published the same, for thy behoof and benefit. If thou hast but a grain of candor in thy heart, and wilt pass sentence according to the postscript of Truth, thou wilt judge and call this Writing not Heretical, *but* Peaceable. *But you will say, What peace, what agreement either can or ought a Christian man to have with* Hereticks? *Good Reader, we undertake not the patronage of* Hereticks. *But before you exclude* others *out of the verge of Christian charity, and throw the thunder-bolt of an Anathema upon them, you should well weigh and consider, to whom the crime of Heresie is justly to be imputed. In passing censure upon Hereticks, it was not so easie a matter to mistake in that Golden age, wherein the Christian Church was founded by the Apostles, and governed by themselves, as in this Age of ours. For though in those beginnings of the Christian Church there did divers Errors, yea, and Heresies spring up, nevertheless from that confusion of dissenting Opinions, there were not peculiar Churches, distinguished by divers forms of Confessions and Ceremonies, as yet started up, but there was then one only Christian Church, and she truly Apostolical,*

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and in all points of Doctrine, which she professed, of a sound belief. Wherefore to contradict this Church, *and her doctrine, was truly blasphemous, truly* Heretical: *and whomsoever, either the Apostles themselves, or also other Apostolical Doctors of the Primitive Church declared Hereticks, they might also deservedly be accounted such by all Christians, and there was no danger of error in that censure, no not among the more ignorant Christians, as following the judgment of the very Holy Spirit, by whom those Divine Governours of the Church were guided, as appeared by most evident Arguments. But at this day, inasmuch as there are, alas! so many and so various Churches of Christians, which of all will be so bold as to ascend with like confidence to that of the Apostles, to that sacred Tribunal, from which she may pronounce sentence on the rest, as Heretical? It is out of controversie, that such an authority can agree to no more then one of them. For the true Church can be but* one: *and only the true one is able to judge and condemn all the rest as Heretical. Now forasmuch as amongst all those Churches, which will at this day be called Christian, (I justly here except the vain arrogancy of the* Roman Church) *none dares undoubtedly to arrogate to it self the infallible certainty of the Apostolical Truth in all the heads of her Confession, it may hence clearly enough appear, that the censure of Heretical Pravity doth so evidently agree to none of them, that we deservedly ought also to acquiesce in her determination. I am not ignorant of what the greatest part of our Divines are here wont to reply. That the Primitive Apostolical Church, say they, is ceased, we do not deny: yet inasmuch as we have the doctrine of that Church consigned in the monuments of the Evangelists and the Apostles, we cannot chuse but pronounce them Hereticks, who contradict the Doctrine there expressed. I also, dear Friends, easily permit, that in this dispute of ours, the Divine Writings of the Apostles stand in this stead, so that he which contradicteth them, be no less esteemed an Heretick, then he that heretofore contumaciously opposed the Apostles preaching by word of mouth. But even thus can we not challenge that censorian rod against Hereticks, For they, whom ye place in the rank of Hereticks, are so far from contradicting the Holy Scripture, that they wage war against you out of the same, and appeal to the judgment thereof, not without a certain hope of victory, in the examination of their cause, inasmuch as they embrace the Scripture in all things, with as great a veneration of mind as you do: nor amongst all the Christian Churches, which are at this day extant, shall ye shew any one, (that I know of) which doth not religiously, and from the Heart yield an undoubted assent to all those things, that are proposed and taught in the Holy Scripture. Wherefore*

there

there is no cauſe why ye ſhould condemn any one of them for hereſie, ſince they agree with you in giving due credence to the Sacred Writ. And therefore whatſoever pretence ye ſeek for your carnal zeal againſt ſuch as you call Hereticks, yet to indifferent judgments can no other ground hereof appear, then their diſſent from your *Interpretation of the Holy Scripture, as to the controverted Doctrines. But I will here bountifully grant you, that ye have in all things hit the true ſenſe of the Scripture, and defend it. Nevertheleſs it is further requiſite, that ye make this plain to them, whom ye brand with the crime of Hereſie. But what here is the ſtreſs of your Arguments? Ye appeal again to the Holy Scripture, and from thence condemn Hereticks. But they have already ſtricken this weapon out of your hands, ſhewing that the Holy Scripture maketh for you, only in your own ſenſe and interpretation, and they that are accordingly condemned by you, not from the ſacred Scripture, but from* your *interpretation of the ſacred Scripture. And this is the circle of your arguing, which they deſervedly reject. Draw out therefore againſt Hereticks thoſe truly Apoſtolical weapons, not the Thraſonical prating of the Chair in the Univerſity, but the power of the holy Spirit, wherewith the Apoſtles being endued, could deliver Blaſphemers to Satan,* 1 Tim. 1. 20. *and ſlay Hypocrites with the ſpeaking of a word,* Act. 5. *If ye want the powerful efficacy of the Spirit, acknowledge your raſhneſs and iniquity in condemning them, to whom ye are not able with evident and ſufficient arguments to demonſtrate your interpretation of the holy Scripture, and who by the ſame right, and from the ſame foundation object to you not only Errors, but alſo Hereſies. Ye know that of Chriſt:* Condemn not, and ye ſhall not be condemned. *What account will ye give to this juſt Judge, for ſo often violating this precept? Your zeal of the Divine Glory will not then excuſe you: for though it pallate it ſelf under this reverend Name, yet it is wholly of the fleſh, and odious to God. But if ye affirm that it proceedeth from the Holy Spirit, produce arguments worthy of ſo great an Author. For neither is this Spirit ſo weak, but that he can ſhew forth tokens of his Divine authority and preſence in his Miniſters, and by them againſt his Enemies. But whither am I carried away? I beſeech thee, good Reader, to pardon this digreſſion of mine; and having liked the pious counſel of our Author, intreat God, that he would inſtil into other Readers alſo a Mind ſtudious of Peace and Concord.* Farewel.

FINIS.

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